

# Aiding the Entente

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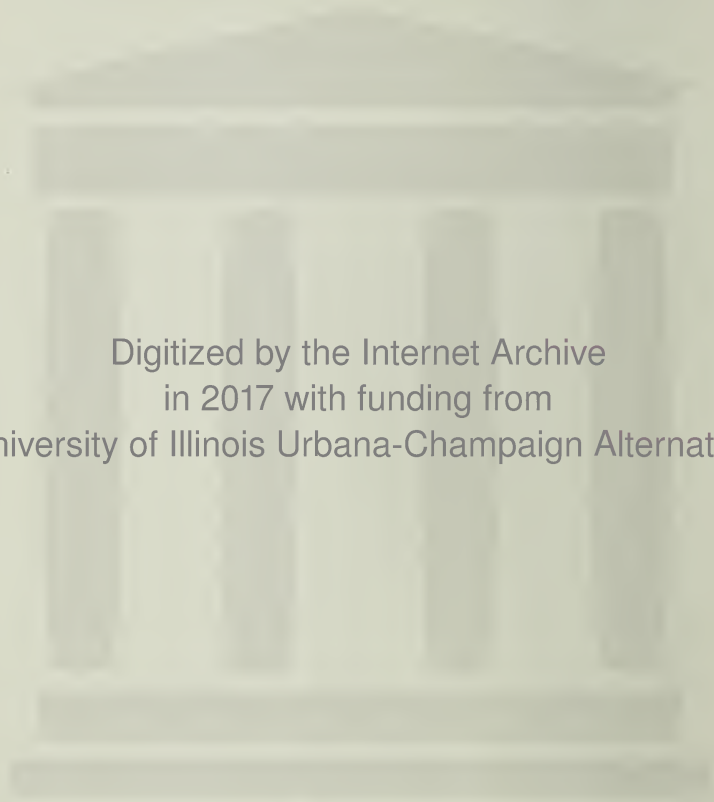
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# an American Policy

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# Aiding the Entente as an American Policy

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An Official Declaration Is Advocated as Our Best Course—  
Losses Due to the Blockade to be Paid  
by a Tax Upon Ourselves

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To the Editor of The New York Times:

The present dominant sentiments of the American people, if I read the signs of the times aright, are for peace, preparedness, and the destruction of German militarism. These three objects are closely related and are, in fact, mutually interdependent. The destruction of German militarism would quickly prepare the way for a durable peace. Peace re-established without the destruction of German militarism would be unstable and, so far as we can now see, in its ultimate effect upon the human race would be worse than the continuance of the war. And until militarism is destroyed—until the world is rid of aggressive nations coveting the territory or wealth of other nations—preparedness is a vital and immediate need of all nations possessing the coveted territory or wealth.

The American people are by tradition unalterably opposed to militarism—that is, to the system under which there is a subordination of the civil to the military regime and of the civil power to the military power of the State. History is a witness to the abominable deeds of oppression and cruelty committed in its name. It is incompatible with American ideals, which, as our Secretary of State finely expressed it before the Pan American Congress, do not lie in the path of conquest, but in the paths of peace and justice. And in particular militarism is incompatible with those principles of liberty and individualism which are the cherished heritage of the English-speaking world.

While for these reasons we are opposed to militarism in general, with still greater reason do we dread and abhor German militarism, because it is so efficient, so ruthless, and so unrestrained by any principle of law, morality, or humanity. The invasion of Belgium, the use of asphyxiating gas,

the Zeppelin raids, the Lusitania, Arabic, Ancona, and other horrors of submarine warfare, the shooting of Miss Cavell, the plotting against life and property, and the deeds of violence in this neutral country are each and all lurid revelations of the particular brand of militarism which is made in Germany. Captain von Papen, upon his being informed that President Wilson had demanded his recall, is reported to have said: "I have no regrets. I have simply done my duty as a soldier and have obeyed instructions." (It is to be noted that this is a confession that whatever he was responsible for was done under the orders of his superior officers.) Similarly, Captain Boy-Ed, with equal nonchalance, is reported to have expressed himself as follows: "I have simply done my duty as a naval officer, and the majority of criticisms against me in the American press have been unjustified and unfair. The American newspaper men have not taken into consideration the strain under which I have labored and the fact that none of my activities were individual in character, but that I have been simply an officer carrying out orders to the best of my ability under all circumstances." (Another naive confession!)

This is the essence of German militarism—obedience implicit and unquestioning. Whatever the great military oligarchy orders you to do, whether it is to destroy priceless works of art, to kill innocent women and children, or to shoot down a ministering angel of mercy, you do it without hesitation, and after it is done you contemplate your deeds with complacent satisfaction, feeling that you have simply acted as a blind instrument of ruthless military force and have done nothing in your individual capacity as a moral being. Against such militarism the whole world, including all loyal German-Americans who are in sympathy with our institutions, should be inflexibly arrayed, and until such militarism is destroyed we cannot escape the obligations and burdens of preparedness, naval and military.

The advocates of preparedness have sometimes been accused of selfish purposes. This is the usual argumentum ad hominem which can always be used against either party to a controversy. Undoubtedly selfish motives enter to some extent into every national policy, but nothing can be clearer than that our military and naval officers and our manufacturers of munitions constitute negligible factors in the affairs of this nation, and that the plan of preparedness which will be finally adopted will be based on the broad and fundamental national needs and will be determined in accordance with the judgment of patriotic Americans, uninfluenced by any selfish consideration other than a commendable selfish regard for the welfare of the country. And there need be no fear that

America, in pursuing a sound policy of preparedness, will be diverted from her path of peace or abandon any of her old ideals.

There can also be no doubt that the overwhelming sentiment and influence of this nation will always be for peace, for its maintenance so long as that is possible, and for the speediest re-establishment of it after it has been broken. But in our desire for peace, we must not lose sight of the fact that a peace which is not based on justice and the right adjustment of international relations may be a curse instead of a blessing. In the present crisis, therefore, we must use such influence as we may have to promote the re-establishment of such a peace as will not involve the menace of future wars. And to this end we must insist, so far as we may have any voice in the matter, that there shall be no peace which will add to the prestige and menace of German militarism.

If the foregoing propositions are sound, the path of our nation's duty is clearly marked out for us. We should, in the first place, promptly modify our present official attitude of neutrality in thought and action.

At the outbreak of the war President Wilson not only issued the usual proclamation of neutrality, but, out of regard for the large Teutonic element in our population, he issued a special appeal to the country, enjoining neutrality in thought and action. This was an attempt to impose upon us what probably under any circumstances would have proved to be an impossible task, but it was made all the more difficult by the attitude of the German Government, which, not being satisfied with the neutrality of this country, at once set to work to win our sympathy and support. At first its efforts were limited to the methods of a fairly legitimate educational campaign. The country was flooded with literature and public meetings were addressed by speakers presenting the German point of view. But in spite of the most strenuous efforts of this sort the American people, after having patiently weighed the facts and arguments, remained of the same opinion still, and finally the whole campaign broke down ingloriously at the time of the torpedoing of the *Lusitania*, when Dr. Dernburg so gravely misinterpreted the temper of the American public.

This campaign of education, having failed of its object, was followed by the nefarious and sinister plottings and conspiracies, apparently financed by the German Government, against the lives and property of American citizens, against the legitimate industries of the country, and against the flotation of the Anglo-French loan. These conspiracies have likewise miserably failed, and they have not only failed, but they have had an effect quite contrary to the intention of those who



sought to carry them into execution, the effect, namely, of strengthening and consolidating the sentiment of the American people in favor of the Allies and of absolving us from all further obligation to attempt to maintain an attitude of neutrality. Let us be frank and honest. There is no use of further pretending that the country is neutral. It is no longer neutral, and the official attitude of our Government should be brought into harmony with the real attitude of the country and should give expression to our sympathy with the cause of the Allies.

As a corollary to this official declaration of our sympathy with the Allies we should not interfere with the British blockade of Germany, even if it should conflict with the rights of some of our citizens. It would be utterly incongruous and would shock the conscience of the country if by pursuing our protests against the British Orders in Council we should hamper the operations of the Allies, who are really fighting our battles and contending for principles which we hold most dear. And the country should lose no time in letting Congress and the Administration know what its sentiments are on this subject. Assuming for the purpose of argument that the blockade cannot be made completely effective without violating the rights of our citizens, it may be urged that these rights should not be abandoned or sacrificed even for our general welfare. There is merit in this contention. It is one of the cardinal principles of our Constitutions that private property shall not be taken even for public use without compensation. But this difficulty may be easily overcome. Our Government can establish a claims commission to determine, after the close of the war, upon the basis of legal evidence, the amount of injury suffered by our citizens as a result of the blockade. This commission could be given jurisdiction to pass upon the whole question both of law and of fact. And if it should be determined that the rights of our citizens had been violated and that they were entitled to an award of damages, we should not ask England to pay those damages, but we should assume the payment of them ourselves. We ought to be willing to make at least this small contribution to the cause of liberty and to the right settlement of the tremendous issues involved in the present war. If exact justice could be done it might be contended that the award of damages to those who had suffered from the blockade should be paid out of funds raised by a special tax upon those who have benefited by the immense expansion of our foreign trade, for which this country is indebted to the invincible British Navy. But the benefits of this enlarged foreign trade have been so widely diffused among all classes of our citizens, including not merely manufacturers of munitions, of automobiles, and of many kinds of steel and leather goods, but also the oil men, the miners,

and the farmers of the West, that practical justice will be done by levying a tax upon the whole country.

The advantages of the suggested policy may be briefly stated as follows:

We should contribute very directly and efficiently to the speedy re-establishment of peace. There is danger that, if Germany is any longer permitted to indulge in the illusion that she can ever win the sympathy or support of this country before she renounces her militarism and her dreams of world domination, she will be induced to continue the struggle beyond the time when any useful purpose can be served and possibly to the irreparable impairment of her economic resources. She is fairly entitled to know officially what the attitude of this country is, and there is reason to believe that, when every doubt as to our attitude is removed, she will become accessible to reasonable proposals of peace.

We should also retain and strengthen the friendship of the Allies for this country. We have already lost for the time being the good-will of the Teutonic allies, and simple prudence dictates that we should not incur any more enmities. And until we have put our military and naval house in order, the friendship and support of the Allies might be of the greatest advantage to us. Indeed, with the active support of France and England, and especially with such an alliance between the three great liberty-loving nations of the world, as President Eliot has advocated, the need of a large army, or even a large navy, would be greatly diminished. The suggested policy therefore would contribute in a very direct manner to the solution of our difficult problem of preparedness and deserves the support of pacifists as well as of the advocates of preparedness.

Finally, by modifying our present neutrality and throwing the full weight of our moral influence, and, if need be, of our material resources into the scales on the side of the Allies, we shall gain the right to be heard as to the terms of peace. We are vitally interested in these terms of peace. We are vitally interested in the right settlement of the tremendous issues involved in this great war, and we are vitally interested that these issues shall be so settled as to assure an enduring peace and to relieve ourselves as well as the rest of the world from the burden and waste of military preparedness. It may also be important that we should have a voice in the councils of peace in order to mitigate the exactions of the conquerors. The sentiment and influence of this country will always be against harsh terms and against the "crushing" or crippling of any nation.

The modification of our neutrality to the extent above indicated does not mean the widening of the area of warfare

or that we shall become involved in it and in the frightful sacrifices of human life which modern warfare entails. Our official expressions of sympathy with Greece in her struggle for independence against Turkey did not involve us in war. On the contrary, the policy herein suggested means in all human probability the speedier return of peace and on a basis just and fair to all parties. And it is earnestly submitted that a policy may be confidently commended as one possessing intrinsic merit, which by a single stroke will contribute simultaneously to the three great objects of our desires—peace, preparedness, and the destruction of German militarism.

—GEORGE F. CANFIELD.



